DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 748 PS 030 372

TITLE	Grassroots Organizing: A Handbook for Child Care Teachers and Family Child Care Providers. Revised Second Edition.
INSTITUTION	Center for the Child Care Workforce, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, MI.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	22p.; Part of the "Worthy Wage Action Packet 2000." For another component of this Packet, see PS 030 396.
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for the Child Care Workforce, 733 15th Street, Suite 1037, Washington, DC 20005-2112 ($4; complete Worthy Wage Action Packet, $10). Tel: 202-737-7700; Fax: 202-737-0370; e-mail: ccw@ccw.org. For full text: http://www.ccw.org/pubs/grassrootshandbook.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Advocacy; Change Strategies; *Child Caregivers; *Compensation (Remuneration); *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; Family Day Care; *Leadership Training; Salaries; Wages
IDENTIFIERS	*Grassroots Efforts

ABSTRACT

The Center for the Child Care Workforce (formerly the Child Care Employee Project), has provided leadership for a nationwide grassroots effort called the Worthy Wage Campaign, an activist initiative to increase public awareness and to press for a public investment of child care funds directly targeted to improving child care jobs. This handbook offers practical help in building an active, effective worthy wage group at the community level. Part 1 of the handbook discusses the organization of a local worthy wage group and addresses issues related to defining goals, choosing tasks, avoiding burnout, reaching out to community to build diversity, and maintaining group continuity. Part 2 presents activities, exercises, and action plans that have been used successfully by local worthy wage groups, leadership training classes, and mentoring programs. Part 3 offers suggestions for facilitating meetings and workshops, including tips for moderating discussions, dealing with difficult dynamics, making decisions, and evaluating a meeting or workshop. Principles guiding the national Worthy Wage Campaign from 1991 to 1999 conclude the report and provide a springboard for defining the principles to guide local work. (Contains 13 references.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 464 748

Grassroots Organizing

A Handbook for Child Care Teachers and Family Child Care Providers

Center for the Child Care Workforce

PS 030372

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Marc Young

2A

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Grassroots Organizing

A Handbook for Child Care Teachers and Family Child Care Providers

Contents

Introduction 1

PART ONE
Organizing a Local Worthy Wage Group 6

PART TWO
Activities, Exercises and Action Plans 11

PART THREE
Facilitating Meetings and Workshops 16

Guiding Principles 23

References and Further Reading 24

CCW Resources and Training Opportunities 25

Center for the Child Care Workforce
733 15th St. N.W., Suite 1037
Washington, DC 20005-2112
Phone: 800-UR-WORTHY or 202-737-7700
Fax: 202-737-0370
E-mail: ccw@ccw.org
Internet: www.ccw.org

© Center for the Child Care Workforce, 1997

Revised second edition, 2000

Special thanks to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, for its support in the production of this Handbook.

Introduction

Helping children to learn and grow, to question and create, to solve conflicts and honor differences, to trust themselves and others... Nurturing, comforting, playing, guiding... We know that the work we do every day in child care is vitally important. We know we make a daily difference in children's and parents' lives. Then why is it often so difficult to sustain *ourselves* in this profession?

Whether we call ourselves child care workers, family day care providers, preschool or early childhood teachers, assistants or aides or caregivers, we are working in a field where most of us are severely underpaid and undervalued. More than one-third of the child care work force is likely to leave the field this year; at such a rate of turnover, the shortage of trained and qualified staff has become a national crisis. Those of us who do remain on the job share the extra burden of constantly training new co-workers, and striving to improve the quality of care for children and families.

How will the child care staffing crisis be solved? It has become clear that parent fees alone cannot guarantee every child a high-quality child care experience, and that the system itself needs a greater investment of public resources. Such change in public policy will require a broad base of support. That support is most effectively mobilized at the local level. We – teachers and providers who have learned to be advocates and agents of changed on our own behalf – can press for solutions. We can work for short-term goals that improve child care jobs now *and* we can broaden our base of support to demand the resources that child care needs.

While many allies are important in the movement for better child care compensation, none of them are as likely as we are to make it their highest priority. Parents, especially women, are often underpaid themselves, and feel hard-pressed to pay more for child care. And many parents' connection with child care is fleeting – typically three to four years, while their children are young. Nor do most child care organizations address their members' economic needs, or they do so only as one of many issues. Indeed, many have traditionally viewed an active call for better wages as unprofessional or inappropriately political behavior – when what is *truly* unprofessional is to keep ignoring the effects of an unstable system on the daily lives of children.

The worker-based movement to improve child care compensation has roots as far back as union campaigns during the 1940s and 1950s, and the rise of teacher advocacy groups in a handful of communities in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1978, the Center for the Child Care Workforce was founded in Berkeley, Calif. as the Child Care Employee Project (CCEP), a grassroots organization of child care teachers in the San Francisco Bay Area. CCEP took on the role of networking other small grassroots groups around the country, and the work of developing resources for others to use in their organizing work began in earnest. In the late 1980s, CCEP undertook its biggest project – the first-ever National Child Care Staffing Study, which established a clear link between the quality of care that children receive and the compensation and stability of their child care teachers. As it became more prominent in the national spotlight, CCEP moved its head office to Washington, D.C. in 1994, and eventually changed its name to the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW).

From 1991 to 1999, our organization also provided leadership for a nationwide grassroots effort called the Worthy Wage Campaign. Until that time, child care workers had largely expressed their discontent individually and alone, by walking off the job and disappearing from the field. The Worthy Wage Campaign created a new wave of impatience and activism, encouraging many of us to stay and do something about our plight. We began to lead the way in reversing the child care staffing crisis.

Since that time, and continuing today, community activists have been working together to:

- find our own voices and articulate what we know;
- name and understand the barriers and dilemmas we share in common in the child care field;

- experience and use our own power in finding solutions;
- connect our confidence and knowledge about working with children to the tasks of working with adults;
- take actions that build public understanding, support and respect for our work;
- advocate for resources to improve compensation and working conditions; and
- mobilize teachers and providers to use our collective power to press for change.

Beginning in the year 2000, the role of the Center for the Child Care Workforce has shifted to assisting local organizing by providing resources and leadership training, and to re-launching the Worthy Wage Campaign as a broad-based Worthy Wage Network, focused on pressing for a public investment of child care funds that are directly targeted to improving child care jobs.

While CCW itself is now less engaged in direct community organizing, we are confident that the success of the eight-year Worthy Wage Campaign in building a stronger movement for better compensation will live on in a number of communities. We hope that this Handbook will inspire efforts in your area, too.

Why grassroots organizing? Our own experiences reflect the issues best: we know how the instability of the child care workplace affects not only our own well-being, but the stability and potential of young children's lives. Only we can move child care compensation from a problem that might be solved someday, to one that must be solved *now*. Our voices carry urgency, authenticity and strength. But we can't do this work alone. This Handbook offers some practical help as you work with others in your community to build an active, effective worthy wage group. Inside you'll find information on organizing, group facilitation skills, developing action plans, exercises you can try at meetings and workshops, and other resources available from the Center for the Child Care Workforce.

The activities and exercises in Part Three are organized to reflect the *three stages of empowerment*:

- coming to a greater awareness of the issues ("Finding our voices and telling our stories"),
- engaging in inquiry about these issues ("Reflection, analysis and vision"), and
- stepping forward to create solutions ("Building skills and taking action").

Using the process outlined in this Handbook, we can: articulate our own stories; learn to interpret our experiences in the larger context of history and community; and use that knowledge to identify appropriate steps toward change. The division into three stages is actually somewhat artificial. Ideally, all three stages can be part of every meeting, class or workshop: telling about our experience; identifying common problems and barriers; and reaching agreement on some kind of course of action, whether large or small.

Awareness leads to further inquiry; inquiry leads to action; action leads to deeper awareness; and so the cycle continues. The strongest movements constantly come full circle to where they began – to the process of building a caring community, and welcoming new people in. Whether it's our two-thousandth meeting or our first, there is strength in speaking to each other, and listening to each other, about what matters most and what sustains us in our work. In this way we can foster a movement that keeps its focus not only on moving toward our short- and long-term goals, but on appreciating and honoring each person along the way.

This Handbook, like the worthy wage movement itself, is still in the process of evolving and growing. Please give us your feedback on how to improve it for future editions. Tell us about your experiences in using it, and about activities that have worked especially well for you. And thank you for your work in making child care a livable, sustaining, and well-respected job for teachers and providers throughout the country.

PART ONE

Organizing a Local Worthy Wage Group

Since the early 1990s, locally-based worthy wage groups have emerged in dozens of communities around the country. Their structure varies widely, but they all share two things in common: a dedicated (though often small) core group of people, and the challenge of sustaining themselves and each other over time.

Some teachers and providers first got involved in their communities through early childhood education classes or at a conference. Others were members of existing groups such as NAEYC affiliates that decided to become active for worthy wages. Many began organizing local groups with as few as three to five people at the start, for the purpose of taking some kind of action on national Worthy Wage Day. (May 1 of each year is designated as Worthy Wage Day, a day to spotlight the child care staffing crisis nationwide.)

The creativity released through their work has been endless, as each local group throughout the country designs its own actions. Some have surrounded their state houses with stuffed "worthy wage babies" (dolls made of cardboard and newspaper, bearing slogans about the staffing crisis). Others have presented "invoices" to their state or local government for the amount owed the child care workforce for their subsidy of child care costs. Most inspiring have been the many stories of personal transformation that we have heard from people involved in this work at the local level.

One Seattle teacher has said, "The worthy wage movement is the 'nest' where in the last three years I have grown tremendously as a leader, and as a believer in myself and my work with kids." Members of local worthy wage groups have worked hard and at times faced disappointment, but have often emerged as more confident spokespeople for themselves, their co-workers and a better child care system.

Getting Started: Defining Long-Term and Short-Term Goals

Some people say that "knowing where you are going is halfway to getting there." Improving the compensation of child care teachers and providers will no doubt be part of your group's vision, but if you further define your long-term vision, it may shed some light on how to work toward those goals. The Guiding Principles (see the back of this Handbook) are a good starting point for discussion. Your group may also prefer to elaborate its own vision through a brainstorming process. The point here is not to spend lots of time on the particular list of principles, but rather, to develop general agreement about the long-term goals you are working toward.

To maintain hope and to sustain ourselves, we must also articulate some achievable short-term goals that will lead us toward our ultimate vision. If it feels intimidating to come up with goals, remember your own stories and share with others what you want people to know about your work. Start by defining what you would like the work environment, including salaries, to be for each member of your group, and you will be well on your way.

Developing a local ACTION PLAN

1. **Mapping your community.**
   Assess the current status of child care jobs and efforts for improvements in your community.
   A. Who is doing what, where and how to improve compensation and working conditions in your community? (Your strengths, your allies.)
   B. What groups/individuals in your community may have an interest in improving child care jobs? Who are the successful community organizers working in other areas of social change? (Your potential.)

2. **Making the plan.**
   A. Brainstorm your vision for good child care jobs.
   B. From your vision, generate one goal statement.
   C. Identify the "steps" to achieving the goal.
      1. What action is needed?
      2. Who from the community must be involved? (See "Mapping your community," above.)
      3. What information or materials do you need?
      4. What is your time frame for your plan?

3. **Celebrating your victory.**
   A. How will you measure your victory?
   B. How will you celebrate your success?

Choosing Tasks and Avoiding Burnout

After you have defined your goals, you will be ready to plan strategies to achieve them. Often groups start with three or four people who are eager to work on worthy wage issues and get a local campaign started. To begin, designate the categories of tasks that need to be done. For example, the task of *distribution* involves mailing, photocopying and other work related to campaign literature. *Membership* or *outreach* involves phone calling, developing mailing lists, and making personal contacts with potential members.

Other categories could include:

- *actions*: organizing events and activities.
- *policy*: talking to legislators, testifying at hearings, meeting with other child care groups, etc.
- *media relations*: working with the press.
- *organizing meetings*: arranging space, facilitator, food, etc.
- *fundraising*: organizing events to raise money for your group.

When organizing your local campaign, select a few main categories for the year, and assign each person one category to work on for a few hours per week. Seasoned coalition members recommend that you target at least two areas: membership and distribution. If you have more people, or as you attract more people, you may choose to add on other categories of work. Be realistic! This work is time-consuming. Set attainable goals and clear tasks to avoid losing people along the way. Especially for people who already hold a full-time job, organizing is hard work. Most people will probably ask, "Where will I find three more hours a week?"

One answer is release time – when teachers and providers are able to use *paid* time to work on community projects that support better child care jobs. Release time costs money, but there are various ways it can be financed. In some communities, teachers have arrangements with their centers to find volunteers or parents who can fill in on a regular basis once a week. Four parents, for example, could share the weekly duty so that each parent volunteers for a couple of hours per month. In other centers, teachers have found

local advocacy organizations willing to sponsor half of their paid release time while their centers pay the other half. Local worthy wage campaigns have also raised funds for release time through businesses, foundations, and service organizations such as Kiwanis. With just $4,500, three people could spend three hours per week on the campaign, for 50 weeks, at $10 an hour. Even $2,000 or $3,000 can go a long way. Many directors understand the need for teacher leadership and are facilitating teacher involvement through paid release time.

Being paid for some of the time spent on local worthy wage campaign work not only provides the hours needed to sustain a local organizing effort; it provides the respect and support we need to keep going. Child care compensation and quality are complex issues that will not be solved overnight. Because we need long-term commitment from teachers and providers to organize successfully for a worthy wage, we need community support to maintain this commitment.

Success Stories!

In New Bedford, MA, teachers at the United Front Child Development Centers receive 24 paid hours each year for advocacy work. This arrangement was negotiated in their union contract. Teachers at the Child Care and Education Program in Greensboro, NC receive 40 paid hours each year for professional development, which includes advocacy work. With funds from A Territory Resource, Seattle, WA teachers are able to be paid for some of their work on their local Worthy Wage Task Force.

Outreach: Diversity is Strength

Before a group can become an effective gathering place - a place where child care workers feel inspired to find their voices, tell their stories, and become instruments of change - it should also examine a number of issues about its identity and composition.

Consider, for example, how the group reaches out to the community it is trying to include:

- How does the group attract people to its meetings and events? Does it use existing structures in the community, such as conferences and community college classes, to find where teachers and providers gather? How and where does the group publicize itself?
- Are people of color involved as members of the core group, taking part in the outreach effort and working in leadership roles?
- Are group members open to confronting their own biases and assumptions on issues of race, class and culture?
- Does the group provide a supportive environment for exploring values? For example, our beliefs about money, power and authority will affect our response to particular strategies that might be suggested.
- How does the group welcome newcomers and encourage them to become involved?
- Where does the group meet?
- Are there any barriers within the group to operating effectively? Are there members who dominate discussions or are rigid in their views?

Finally, we must ask whether we are creating a group "culture" that is not only supportive but enjoyable. Does the group help us feel that our activism and membership is also serving to make us better teachers or providers? For example, does our new confidence and leadership ability help make us more effective with parents or get materials we need for our classrooms or homes? Do we give ourselves and others concrete things to do: activities that we find valuable, important and useful right now? What do we do to celebrate and have fun?

The answers to all of these questions will reflect a variety of decisions and assumptions the group is making - whether implicitly or explicitly - about its goals and values. And ongoing attention to these questions can help safeguard that a group will not unconsciously stray from its purpose.

Turnover and Continuity

A recurring issue in all movements for social change is turnover and continuity. What can you do, for example, when you find that people have begun dropping out of the group, and meetings are dwindling down to the same few people?

In every movement, there are people with different levels of commitment. This may also be true in your group. It is not unusual to find that the group plays a more central role in some people's lives than in others. Probably because we experience so much demoralizing turnover on the job, turnover among our fellow advocates can feel devastating. It is easy to think that you are one of the only people who really cares about worthy wage issues. Consider the following:

Learn from the people who have left. Don't just let people leave unnoticed. If someone doesn't return to a meeting, call and find out why. Maybe the person got sick or is facing a family emergency – but maybe she dropped out because of something about the group. Ask for any suggestions about how the group could have better met her needs and interests. If your process or activities have bothered one person, they may well be problematic to others. Use these contacts with "lapsed" members as a kind of evaluation.

Create varied levels of involvement for supporters. Just because someone can no longer attend frequent meetings, it does not have to mean that he or she is "lost" to the campaign. Ask, for example, whether he or she would be willing to help out periodically in other ways – passing out leaflets at an event, or taking on a task that could be done at home. By inviting people to help in a variety of ways, you signal that their contribution, no matter the size, is important to the movement. You may find, indeed, that once any feeling of "pressure" is off, some people may help out more than you anticipated.

Re-evaluate how well you are sharing the work. Think about the opportunities you are creating for members to assume greater responsibility. Sometimes a small core group of people – even when they feel burned out – communicate that everything is under control and that they really don't need any help. Check, for example, whether you think the group would fall apart if one or two particular people left. If you think the answer is "yes," it is important to have members evaluate whether enough is being done to help *everyone* develop their leadership potential.

Celebrate individual progress. Some groups set aside a brief portion of the meeting for members to discuss anything that has occurred since the last meeting that made them feel more hopeful or confident. It might involve talking to a co-worker about the group, or letting your director know that a particular change of schedule doesn't work well for your class. Or maybe you went to talk to an early childhood education class about worthy wages for the first time. What's important is your excitement and the chance to share it with others.

Diversify your activities. Plan some occasional activities other than meetings, whether it's a potluck at somebody's house, dinner at a restaurant, or a sign-making party. Think about "one-shot" activities for people who don't come to regular meetings, whether it's leafleting at a train station on Worthy Wage Day or staffing an information table at a fair.

Claim your victories, no matter how small. Take the time to reflect upon and celebrate what your group has achieved, whether it's successfully getting three new people to a meeting or 200 people to a rally. Reflect upon the progress your group has made. Acknowledge and appreciate all the effort that group members have invested in this important work, and the ways that you have come closer to reaching your common goals.

Axioms shared at the 1998 Worthy Wage Retreat by Betty Shoepen of the Minnesota Nurses Association

Something is better than nothing.
More is better than less.
Sooner is better than later.

PART TWO
Activities, Exercises and Action Plans

The following activities have been used successfully by local worthy wage groups, LEAP (Leadership Empowerment Action Project) training classes conducted by CCW, and mentoring programs around the country. Adapt them to your needs in your own community. Feel free to create your own and tell us about them!

Finding Our Voices and Telling Our Stories

Questions for Discussion. Any of the following questions can be the springboard for "finding our voices and telling our stories" at a group meeting, class or training session.

- What are the rewards of working in child care that keep me going? What are the good parts of my job? (As a way of making this more concrete, you might ask everyone to bring an object that represents their work and what they find most rewarding about it.)
- How did I decide to enter the child care field? How much training did I receive in advance? How prepared was I for the realities of the job?
- How does low compensation affect me personally? How does it affect my work place or the child care field? What difficulties does it create in my life? How does it affect how I feel about my own worthiness and skill as a child care worker?
- What are the most urgent issues at my workplace, in terms of working with children, parents, or other staff?
- What are the barriers to change that exist in my workplace?
- What barriers might there be within myself to taking action for myself or my co-workers, or for the children?

The Diversity Wheel. Draw a wheel or a pie chart on a large piece of paper, and draw lines that divide it into a number of slices. On each "slice," write some aspect of how a person's identity is defined and shaped – for example, culture, race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, skills and interests. Ask participants (in small groups or in pairs) to choose which of the aspects that helped shape their identity they would like to discuss. The discussion could include how they were raised, and any ways in which they changed as they grew older and moved into the world on their own. Group members can invite each other to talk about:

- the values we were taught;
- when we decided we might have a different view of what we were taught, and why;
- what, if anything, has brought about a change of mind or heart in us about the "rules" we were given as children.

This exercise can teach the group a great deal about themselves, their values, and the possibilities each member has for change and growth – and also about diversity within the group as a whole.

The Story Behind the Name. A favorite exercise in Seattle's worthy wage group is for participants to tell the story of how they were given their names. In the process, many people find that they have something interesting to tell about family history, or about role models, mentors or heroes from the past.

How Far Back Do We Go? Another "ice-breaker" in a group discussion might be to ask participants to line up in different parts of the room according to the decade in which they first became involved in child care. When did they first realize that they wanted to do something about child care wages? Are there other movements for social change that they became involved in, and when? This can lead to a discussion of all the history and experience contained in this one room.

Who Gets to Define Us? Pass out index cards, and ask everyone to write words on them that are used to define or describe people who work in child care. Share the results. Ask the group to eliminate the words that are inaccurate or that they don't like, and to add others that are truer, that they would want to include instead.

Reflection, Analysis and Vision

Questions for Discussion. Each of the following questions could lead to a half-hour discussion or more, either separately or as part of a longer workshop. Generate a list of responses from the group to one or more of these:

- What does empowerment mean to you?
- What is the relationship between empowerment and leadership?
- What would teacher/provider empowerment look like at your workplace? What would have to change? What kind of decision-making and problem-solving processes would there be? What training opportunities would you have? What would the climate be between you and the administration, your co-workers and/or the parents?
- How well are you respected as a teacher or provider, and how do people show that respect or lack of it?
- Why are child care wages so low? Why is child care work not respected by society as a whole? What are the roots of these problems?

Workplace Scenarios. Starting with local workplace problems, rather than immediately taking on the whole child care compensation crisis, can be a source of empowerment - a way of seeing how a small action can bring about positive changes. Present the group with a specific dilemma or issue for their analysis - for example, a workplace problem from your own or others' experience, and how it was handled (i.e., who did what?). Examples might include being asked to work with too large a group of children, or not to take a sick day because no subs were available.

Then, in small groups, ask participants to brainstorm - either aloud or on paper - which aspects of the situation were handled well or not, and what might have been done differently. Or the groups could try role-playing different points of view. All should then report back to the larger group, which can compare notes and add suggestions. The facilitator can write the group's responses on a large sheet of paper, and help to divide the various responses into categories.

Internal Barriers. Divide participants into small groups or pairs, and ask each person to think back to a particular situation where she or he faced a problem or dilemma related to child care work. For example: you stayed late waiting for a parent and didn't ask for the late fee because you knew it would be hard for them to pay, or a parent asks you if you "also baby-sit on weekends" and you simply said "no." Remember back to what you were feeling at the time. What happened? What stopped you from responding or taking action; or what worked? If you are dissatisfied with how that situation turned out, practice in your small group, or with your partner, what you could have said or done, or what you can say or do in the future.

Learning from Other Social Movements. We can all benefit by looking beyond the child care world to other efforts for change. It's empowering to learn how other people in the past and present have worked to make the world a better place.

Try any of the following:

- Study another social change organization or coalition effort, including any that group members may have been involved in themselves. This could also be a groundbreaking movement from the past that changed how children were treated – such as the movement for rights for children with disabilities, or the fight to end child labor – or a movement to professionalize another human service field, such as nursing.
- Invite a guest speaker from another movement to describe his or her work.
- Ask each group member to identify and interview an activist in the community. Questions could include: How did the movement or action begin? How did it grow and become stronger? Why? How did leadership emerge and evolve? What could the child care movement learn from this example?
- Watch a film together about a movement or an individual dealing with injustice – ranging from such documentaries as "Eyes on the Prize," "Freedom on My Mind" or "The Times of Harvey Milk" to fictional stories like "Norma Rae" or "The Long Walk Home."

Building Skills and Taking Action

Making Change Happen. How do we make things better? How can we actually make a difference? What is realistic? What skills and resources will we need? How do we begin? Your history and experience will influence what kinds of change you think are possible and what your role will be in making it happen. Many worthy wage groups are composed of people from different generations – those who came of age in the 1960s or 1970s amidst a great deal of social upheaval, as well as those who became adults in the more conservative 1980s and 1990s.

A preliminary exercise might help the members of your group identify how they feel about the possibility of change. In pairs, small groups or as a whole, review the following statements, placing yourself on one side of the room if you think they are true, or the other if you think they are false. (Other ways of doing this would be to simply stand up, or raise hands.) Defend your point of view, and feel free to change sides of the room if you are persuaded by someone else's point of view.

- Only groups with power and money can change public opinion.
- Corporate America doesn't care about child care, and without their support it will never improve.
- The government may expand child care services, but it will never address the salary question.
- Unions are the best way for workers to improve their situation.
- Media attention on an issue doesn't really influence public opinion.
- A small, committed group of people can change the world; they always have.

Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards. During 1997 and 1998, the Center for the Child Care Workforce engaged child care teachers, directors and family child care providers in the development of "Model Work Standards" – a set of criteria identifying high-quality child care work environments. Two publications resulted: *Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care*, and *Creating Better Family Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards*.

The Model Work Standards for center-based staff are divided into 13 categories, ranging from Wages and Benefits to Professional Development, Diversity and the Physical Setting. The Standards declare the right

of child care teachers to work under conditions that reflect and reward their skills, knowledge and experience, and the necessity for child care teachers to be involved in determining their working conditions and in making decisions that affect their work lives.

Model Work Standards for family child care providers are organized into five parts: Model Contracts and Program Policies, Professional Development, The Family Child Care Home as a Work Environment, The Provider as Employer, and Community Support that is needed to create better family child care jobs.

Both sets of standards are designed to be used as an assessment and organizing tool on several levels:

- in programs as a vehicle for immediately beginning to improve jobs conditions;
- in local communities, where representatives of many child care programs and support agencies can identify cooperative ventures to improve the child care infrastructure; and
- with policy makers and funders to raise awareness about the amount of resources that will be necessary to make lasting, comprehensive improvements in the nation's child care system.

Taking Risks. Ask group members to write down for themselves a list of any potential risks they could face by getting involved in a Worthy Wage action plan or some other aspect of the campaign. Then, they should review these lists and check off which risks they're willing to take now, and which ones they're not (or at least not yet). Keep in mind that as a group leader, when you ask others to join with you, you are asking them to take some risks as well. We need to name the risks involved in becoming leaders and activists, and acknowledge that not all of us can take all of these risks at a given time.

Public Speaking. Leaders and activists are often called upon to speak in front of groups. If this is a skill that people in your group would like to develop, try the following steps to help them practice in a non-threatening setting.

- Ask everyone to select a topic on which they feel very competent, and to prepare a three-to-five-minute presentation about it. (Allow them at least overnight to prepare.) The presentation can relate to child care or some aspect of their jobs, or involve another aspect of their lives, such as gardening, cooking, books or TV shows.
- In pairs or small groups of three to four, ask everyone to take turns delivering their presentations and providing feedback to each other about what was easy to understand, what was unclear, etc.
- Gather again as a large group to discuss this experience. What did people learn? Which types of feedback were most helpful? A variation, if time permits, would be to ask everyone to repeat the presentation to the same (or another) partner, incorporating any suggestions for improvement they heard.

PART THREE
Facilitating Meetings and Workshops

Introductions

First impressions about a meeting or a session go a long way in shaping our feelings about it. Consider:

- Is everyone personally greeted when they enter?
- Are name tags available if everyone does not know each other?
- Does everyone have information about the agenda - either receiving their own copy or seeing it visibly displayed?
- Has time been allotted to review the agenda, so that the group has a shared understanding of why they have come together?

Introductions can range from simply going around the room and saying names, to posing more involved warm-up questions for people to answer about their program or reasons for coming to the session. Sometimes it's a good icebreaker to ask participants to share something they like to do outside of work. If there are lots of people, you might consider introductions or warm-up activities in smaller groups or pairs. Sometimes even a show of hands in response to a question (e.g., how many of you have ever come to work sick because you couldn't find a substitute?) can make people feel that they are joining with others with similar concerns or skills.

Facilitating Discussions

To facilitate something is to make it run smoothly. A facilitator:

- starts the meeting
- calls upon people during discussions
- helps people to clarify what they mean and to stay on the topic
- keeps track of time
- moves the group through its agenda.

Co-facilitating is a good way for leaders to share responsibility. In the thick of things, it can be easy to get off track. If two people are facilitating, one can keep track of time and the mood of the group, while another focuses on moving through the agenda.

The following are some of the skills that will assist you in guiding discussions:

- listening
- supporting
- clarifying
- summarizing
- relieving tension
- sharing information
- evaluating
- appreciating or encouraging
- maintaining focus

All of these skills are necessary for a group to run smoothly, but they don't need to be embodied in just one person. Many of the group members will have some of these skills, and can also be encouraged to use them during the session.

Tools for Effective Facilitation

"Reading the group" accurately will help enhance rapport among group members. Anticipating basic needs is the first step; for example, plan for breaks and refreshments if your session is lengthy. Be familiar, also, with group dynamics – for example, "group think," an excessive tendency to maintain cohesiveness at the cost of critical thinking and risk taking. Remember the significance of silence as a voice of the group. In cases in which silence is "spoken loudly," you might say, "I don't have the feeling that we're all really in agreement. Does anyone have a question or concern they would like to put on the table at this point?"

Clarifying what someone has said is helpful to ensure understanding and decrease the possibility of unnecessary conflict. Paraphrasing or checking for accuracy can help people clarify their intentions and let them know that you hear them accurately.

Probing group members to be more specific is a skill that facilitators can use to help move individuals, or groups, from a position of "feeling stuck" to one of new understanding. By asking questions, a facilitator can coach a reflective process that invites discovery and clarity. Questions could include:

- What would that look like?
- How is what you've just said different from this other idea?
- Could you expand that further?

Depersonalizing conflict is essential in order to be an impartial facilitator. When working with diverse groups, the personality, tone or learning style needs of participants may cloud your perceptions and attitudes. It is essential to focus on the problem, not the person, when responding to difficult issues in facilitating groups. At the same time, it is often necessary to give difficult feedback – for instance, if you observe unproductive group behaviors such as blocking, sabotaging, excessive humor or monopolizing. In any case, always attempt to remove your own ego from the conflict, and remain impartial.

See "Dealing with difficult dynamics," below.

Valuing each person's contributions will enhance group development by giving personal meaning to each member's participation. There are several ways you can do this:

- Give positive feedback for comments; for example, "That's a really good suggestion."
- Bring back into the conversation a relevant comment made previously that might otherwise be overlooked.
- Provide a visual focus for the meeting's progress. Newsprint is a good tool for this, allowing participants to see what they have talked about and review decisions that have been made.
- Check to make sure that what you record on news-print accurately reflects what a person has said. Try to use their exact language or phrases as much as possible.

Be prepared: It is a good idea to have a "tool kit" pre-pared and to take it with you whenever you facilitate a meeting or a workshop. This could include:

- a variety of colored markers
- pens for overhead slides
- masking tape
- pushpins
- paper clips
- name tags
- rubber bands
- post-it notes
- business cards
- portable easel
- large pad of newsprint
- audiotape recorder

Dealing with Difficult Dynamics

Group work is challenging, even under the best of circumstances. Here are some typical problems that could emerge during a meeting or workshop:

- Participants are doing distracting things, such as having separate conversations on the side.
- People come late, leave early, or walk in and out of the room.
- Someone is dominating the discussion.
- Some participants rarely or never join in the group discussion.
- Participants are becoming tense with each other.
- Strong opinions or feelings are preventing constructive discussion.
- People are discussing many issues at once.

In each of these situations, the first task will be to determine what is at issue for those involved. If participants are doing distracting things, such as sending notes to another person or walking in and out, their behavior may signal that they are not interested in or identified with what is going on. Next, brainstorm what can be done to prevent these situations. Maybe the particular discussion does not really need to involve the whole group, for example, and that is why it is not holding everyone's attention. Or maybe everyone needs a break. A facilitator can ask people directly what they need in order to feel more involved in the process or can call a break and discuss the issue privately with the people concerned.

It is important to be conscious of power relationships within the group. Because of the diversity in age, ethnicity, class and other experiences among those who work with young children, expect to find real differences among people with respect to self-confidence and skills. Unknowingly, because of past educational and other experiences, some participants may move faster than others, preventing some from contributing to the discussion.

Take time to notice who is participating and engaged in the group. If only the European-Americans, the men or the center-based staff are speaking up, it will be necessary for the group to explore why people of color, women or family child care providers feel less involved.

Decision Making

When a group is coming to a decision, the leader or facilitator plays a critical role. You can point out areas of agreement and clarify where the real differences lie. (For example, "We all agreed that we want to focus on improving benefits, but we haven't decided whether we want to start with health care or sick leave and vacation.") It is important when coming to a decision that all members participate. A facilitator must not assume that silence means agreement in a group. Be sure that everyone expresses an opinion when a decision is being made; individuals are more likely to support a decision in which they have played a part.

Sometimes, however, group decisions are made by individuals or subgroups who push their own point of view and rely on other members to remain passive. You can confront that pattern of decision making by commenting on its frequency and questioning whether all opinions are being taken into consideration. It is also important for group members to realize that avoiding a decision is, in fact, a decision – it is a choice *not* to move forward or change the status quo. Sound decisions are the first step in taking action and creating change. You can help a group make clearer decisions by using one of the following methods:

Majority vote: More than half of the group members agree on a single choice. A major drawback is that those who voted against the decision may not feel committed to implementing it.

Unanimous vote: All group members agree. Problems may arise because some people who feel the pressure to agree may not really support the decision and because one person can block the decision by disagreeing.

Consensus: Internal discussion and polls take place to find common points of agreement. In the course of trying to reach consensus, group members suggest modifications to the original proposal that may be acceptable to others, resulting in a genuine agreement to implement the revised decision. This method, although time-consuming, is the most appropriate when important policy decisions are being made.

Many believe that decisions made by consensus are of higher quality than those arrived at through other forms of decision-making. Consensus is a collective opinion arrived at by a group whose members have listened carefully to the opinions of others, have communicated openly, and have been able to state their opposition to other members' views and seek alternatives in a constructive manner.

When a decision is made by consensus, all members – because they have had the opportunity to influence it – should feel they understand the decision and can support it. Johnson and Johnson (1975) provide the following guidelines for consensual decision making:

- Avoid blindly arguing for your own individual judgments. Present your position as clearly and logically as possible, but listen to other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.
- Avoid changing your mind *only* to reach agreement and avoid conflict. Support only solutions to which you are at least somewhat agreeable. Yield only to positions that have an objective and logically sound foundation.
- Avoid "conflict-reducing" procedures such as majority vote, tossing a coin, averaging or bargaining in reaching decisions.
- Seek out differences of opinion; they are natural and expected. Try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because they present a wide range of information and opinions, thereby creating a better chance for the group to hit upon more adequate solutions.
- Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all members.
- Discuss underlying assumptions, listen carefully to one another, and encourage the participation of all members.

Ways to Evaluate a Meeting or Workshop

Open-ended assessment: This method is especially useful if you are working with a particular group over time. The responses can help inform what a group will need next, and will provide you with feedback about whether or not their expectations were met. The following statements can be placed in the top of each of four quadrants of an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper.

I came expecting :	I got :
I value :	Next I need :

Quick feedback: There are three methods that can provide quick access to participants' assessment of a workshop, activity, meeting or other group process. Right after the activity, ask participants to give you a thumbs-up if they thought it was interesting or helpful, a thumbs-down if they did not find it useful, or a

thumbs-parallel if they are neutral about it. A second method is to ask participants to record on 3" x 5" cards one thing they liked and one suggestion for improvement. A third method would be to go around and ask everyone for a brief "check-out" comment on how they felt the meeting or session went.

Straightforward discussion: This method may be more appropriate for a workshop than a meeting. The facilitator asks for the following information:

- What did you like about the session? What worked well for you? What do you feel you learned?
- What did you dislike about the session? What didn't work well?
- What would you change in the next session to address any concerns you've identified?

Parting Thoughts

- Be prepared.
- Know your audience.
- Embrace group members' ideas and interests.
- Use appropriate tone of voice and body language. It has been estimated that over half of your message depends on body language, one-third on tone of voice, and less than ten percent on the words you choose.
- Celebrate the unexpected.
- Demonstrate your sense of humor — ***have fun!***

Sample One-Hour Workshop Format

1. Welcome, introductions, overview of agenda (5-10 mins.)
2. Opening activity to reflect on topic (10 mins.)
3. Presentation of core ideas (10-15 mins.)
4. Practice applying ideas (15-20 mins.)
5. Next steps and follow-up (5 mins.)
6. Summary and evaluation (5 mins.)

from Margie Carter and Deb Curtis,
Training Teachers. A Harvest of Theory and Practice

Guiding Principles

These principles guided the national Worthy Wage Campaign from 1991 to 1999. Your group may choose to modify these principles, or use them as a springboard for defining the principles that will guide your work.

- Create a unified voice for the concerns of the early care and education workforce at the national, state and local levels.
  - Promote activities that empower child care teachers, providers, administrators and teacher educators to take a leadership role in the transformation of early care and education to an economically viable and socially respected profession.
  - Give teachers and providers a voice in all aspects of the planning and delivery of the services they provide.
- Increase the value of and respect for those who provide early care and education by improving their wages, benefits, working conditions and training opportunities.
  - Compensate early care and education staff at levels commensurate with the skill and value of the important work they perform, without regard to age grouping or program setting.
  - Develop accessible, affordable training opportunities to improve service and to ensure that the early care and education workforce reflects the diverse linguistic and cultural populations it serves.
- Work collaboratively with others to promote the accessibility and affordability of high-quality early care and education options that meet the diverse needs of children and families.
  - Establish standards that reflect the best current knowledge regarding child development and developmentally appropriate education.
  - Increase public funding, with priority given to improving existing early care and education programs (for all age groups and a variety of settings, including Head Start, family child care and center-based programs) rather than expanding the supply of mediocre care.
  - Recognize and incorporate the cultural, linguistic and economic diversity of our communities in all early care and education options.

References and Further Reading

Albelda, R. and Folbre, N. (1996). *The War on the Poor*. New York: New Press.

Bellm, D. (1994). *Breaking the Link: A National Forum on Child Care Compensation*. Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce.

Bolton, R. (1979). *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*. Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Bookman, A. and Morgan, S. (1988). *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Carter, M. and Curtis, D. (1994). *Training Teachers: A Harvest of Theory and Practice*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Center for the Child Care Workforce. (1998, revised second edition, 1999). *Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care*. Washington, DC: CCW.

Center for the Child Care Workforce. (1999). *Creating Better Family Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards*. Washington, DC: CCW.

Johnson, D.W. and Johnson, F.P. (1975). *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Jorde Bloom, P. (1988). *A Great Place to Work: Improving Conditions for Staff in Young Children's Programs*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Rivera, F. and Erlich, J., eds. (1995). *Community Organizing in a Diverse Society*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Rondeau, C. and McKenzie, G. (1990). "Women's Ways of Organizing." *Labor Research Review #18: Let's Get Moving, Organizing for the 90s*. Chicago: Midwest Center for Labor Research.

Shields, K. (1994). *In the Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide for Social Action*. New Society Publishers.

Whitebook, M. (1997). "Who's Missing at the Table? Leadership Opportunities and Barriers for Teachers and Providers." In Kagan, S.L. and Bowman, B.T., eds., *Rethinking Leadership in Early Care and Education*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) Resources

Creating Better Child Care Jobs: Model Work Standards for Teaching Staff in Center-Based Child Care. (1998, revised second edition, 1999)

Creating Better Family Child Care: Model Work Standards. (1999)

Taking on Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors. by Marcy Whitebook and Dan Bellm. (1999)

Worthy Wage Action Packet. (2000 - updated annually)

CCW Training Opportunities

LEAP - Leadership Empowerment Action Project. LEAP is a training process which facilitates participants' ability to strengthen their voices, foster self-respect, take action for improving child care jobs and develop new leadership skills. LEAP is available in a variety of formats depending on the interests and resources of the group. It is offered as a weekend seminar or 2-3 day retreat, and in an expanded version as a college course.

"Taking On Turnover." Throughout the country, communities and child care programs are grappling with a rising crisis of teacher turnover. In response, CCW offers training to help teachers and directors manage and reduce staff turnover. Based on CCW's popular book, *Taking on Turnover: An Action Guide for Child Care Center Teachers and Directors,* this intensive two-day training program includes: understanding and measuring the costs of turnover; managing turnover when it happens; reducing turnover by improving a program's work environment, recruitment and hiring practices, and compensation package; and joining with others to take community-wide action.

Leaders in Action for Worthy Wages: Summer Institute. For those ready to start or step up efforts to improve child care, CCW offers an annual Summer Institute. Led by experienced community leaders from around the country and in a variety of disciplines, the Institute is designed to give participants an intensive hands-on educational experience: a chance to study a core area in-depth, to stretch one's thinking, to develop tools for actions, and to grow as a leader. In addition to core areas of study, elective sessions are also offered. College credit is available for those interested.

For more information on these and other resources and training opportunities, or to join the Worthy Wage Network, contact us by e-mail at ccw@ccw.org, or visit our website at www.ccw.org.